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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

22 June 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State
Secretary of Defense
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: Declaring West Beirut an "International Quarantine Zone"

1. This week we need a step which will put steam behind our efforts to get the hostages out and establish our purpose and resolution to our adversaries, to other nations which are watching us, and to our own people.

2. There is one step which could be taken quickly and on our own initiative. I believe it would strengthen our efforts to get the hostages out, mobilize international involvement, and command popular support all over the world.

3. The President would immediately declare West Beirut and its southern suburbs as an "International Quarantine Zone." West Beirut and its southern suburbs are not under the effective control of any recognized international government and are thus outside the bounds of normal international intercourse and law. In a public statement, West Beirut, controlled by the criminal elements which have pirated our airship and seized and killed our citizens, would be compared to the areas controlled by the Barbary pirates in the 18th century.

4. The following specific steps could implement such a declaration:

- Initiate steps to halt all air traffic in and out of Beirut International Airport. Express regrets but point out that American hostages are being held by criminals who also control the Beirut International Airport.

- The U.S. Sixth Fleet could be ordered to seal off West Beirut and its southern suburbs from the sea, and declare no further commerce by either air or water.

- Ask the Government of Lebanon to seal the border of West Beirut to the east and south wherever possible.

- Send a special envoy to tell Assad that the U.S. Government knows that the Syrian Army border checkpoints along those roads are capable of stopping all traffic in and out of West Beirut and its southern suburbs. Ask him to assist us in isolating the pirates.

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- Ask the Government of Israel to provide whatever support it can offer to separate West Beirut and its southern suburbs from the south.

- Inform those American citizens, including the press, who remain in West Beirut and its southern suburbs that their safety or the safety of their families cannot be guaranteed and we are prepared to help them leave immediately.

- Ask all surrounding countries--Lebanon, Syria, Israel--to cease all commerce with West Beirut and its southern suburbs.

- These steps should be announced along with a declaration that if the American hostages are not immediately released, further actions against West Beirut and its southern suburbs will be considered and taken as necessary.

- Announce that the Vice President is to convene a meeting of senior West European officials during his upcoming trip to seek support from our traditional allies in the isolation of this den of criminals.

- Investigate the possibility of jamming or otherwise incapacitating radios and telecommunication links between West Beirut and its southern suburbs with the world.

5. For maximum and timely impact, the full program should be announced together. Assad and Gemayel may demur or refuse to participate but they will be hard put to resist or refuse cooperating with our efforts to protect our citizens in an area in which Syria does not have sovereignty and over which the Lebanese government has no control.

William J. Casey

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